



## How Do I Know My Child Is Learning?

### Overview

#### Assessments in Michigan Schools

Standardized assessments are tests that Michigan schools use to measure proficiency in a subject area. Understanding the role of testing will help you to enable your child to succeed in school and to develop a better relationship between your family and your child's school.

#### What are standardized tests?

There are two types of standardized assessments, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced. Scores from norm-referenced tests tell you how your child compares to the other children who took the test that year. In contrast, criterion-referenced test scores tell you if your child has achieved certain benchmark levels of achievements.

TEST	GRADE	TIME OF YEAR
Michigan Educational Assessment Program ( <b>MEAP</b> )	3 – 9	October
National Assessment of Educational Progress ( <b>NAEP</b> )	4, 8, and 12	Specific schools are chosen for testing in April the year before the testing takes place. The dates and times vary by administration and the school is informed of these dates well in advance.
<b>MEAP-Access</b> This is an alternative version of the MEAP for students with particular disabilities.	3-8	October
MI-Access	3-8, 11	Fall: Grades 3-8 Spring: Grade 11
Michigan Merit Exam ( <b>MME</b> ) This test consists of the ACT Plus Writing® college entrance examination, WorkKeys® job skills assessments in reading, mathematics, and "locating information," and Michigan-developed assessments in mathematics, science, and social studies.	11	Spring
English Language Proficiency Test ( <b>ELPA</b> ) Used to evaluate K -12 students who are eligible for English Language Learner services.	K-12	Spring

# What Do The Test Results Say About My Child's Progress?

## Overview

Your child's school will provide you with his or her test results usually a few months after the test was taken. If you have questions about the scores or their meaning, contact your child's teacher or another school staff member.

Your child's test data may be used for providing information on:

- his or her academic progress.
- whether your student will advance to the next grade level at the end of the year.
- determining his or her placement in certain classes, such as gifted or resources classes.
- the school's educational effectiveness.

## Strategy

To better understand the types of tests and data gathered from these assessments you may want to ask the teacher or principal:<sup>14</sup>

1. What tests will my child be given during the school year?
2. What is the difference between a test the teacher writes and a standardized test?
3. At what grade level will standardized tests be given? Is there a schedule available?
4. Will someone be available to explain the meaning of test results if I have questions?
5. Should I help my child prepare to take a test, and how would I do that?
6. If I wanted to work with my child on practice tests, where could I get copies of old tests or practice test materials?
7. How important are test scores in my child's grade? Do you consider other class projects, essays and participation too?
8. Do you review tests and test results with the children? Will my child have a chance to understand why an answer was wrong?
9. Is it possible for me to review test results with my child at home?
10. Do you keep a folder of my child's work with test results included?
11. Does the school require proficiency or "high stakes" testing in order to move from one grade level or to graduate?

## Additional Information & Resources

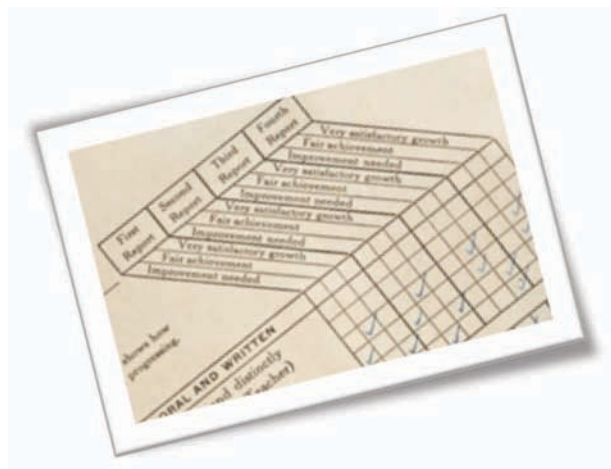
1. Michigan Department of Education, Bureau of Assessment and Accountability  
<http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-22709---,00.htm>

## How To Read A School Report Card<sup>15</sup>

### Overview

Schools usually use a standard report card to illustrate students' academic progress. Learning about this system can help you better understand your child's educational strengths and weaknesses.

- Become familiar with the grading system in your district and in your child's grade. Many schools use a different report card for K-2 than they use for 3-5. Are letter grades used? A numerical score from 1-3? Other letters such as O, G, S, N?
- Make sure you understand the different competencies on the report card. Many use vague descriptors such as "Uses time constructively." If something is not clear to you, ask your child's teacher.
- As you look at your child's report card, RESIST THE IMPULSE to jump directly to an area with a lower score. Find an area with a good grade or score and focus on that first. "You did a great job in \_\_\_\_\_! You must be so proud of all your hard work."
- Once you've focused on the positive, talk about areas in which your child's grade was lower. "Tell me how things have been going in science lately." Start a safe, open dialogue with your child about the difficulty he or she might be having with the subject matter.
- Together, develop strategies to help in subject areas that are difficult for your child. Is there a textbook that needs to come home more frequently? Is there a website that can help with math fact drills? If you're not sure how to best help your child, call the teacher to set up a conference.
- Last, let your child know that he/she is more than just a report card. Remind him/her of all the things that make her special and important in your family. Too much of a focus on grades can only increase the amount of stress your child feels.



### Additional Information and Resources

1. To read this information in Spanish, visit <http://www.colorincolorado.org/articulo/40303/>
2. *What the Report Card Really Means*. Scholastic. <http://www.scholastic.com/resources/article/what-the-report-card-really-means/>